1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

311 177 In the case of the Yaruros all of these factors have played an important role and are currently active in reducing their territories and food supply to a degree that will mean imminent extermination of the people. It is true that since the first settler arrived in their country the Yaruros could have made readjustments in their culture which perhaps might have permitted them to survive. They could have learned, for instance, to raise horses, cattle, and to cultivate the soil as the [178] Guajiros, living in a country similar to the llanos, have done. But they have chosen to remain firm in their own culture, own traditions, and own universe, and as a result are expecting to pay the penalty. Why they have failed to make the readjustment which would have brought them into a livable relationship with the newcomers and have persisted in keeping to their primitive, nomadic existence may be answered in the pages that follow.

361 Dependency on hunting, fishing, and gathering of edible fruits and roots imposes nomadism upon a people and prevents living together in large groups. The degree to which a people have to wander, the extent of the territory over which they must roam, and the size of the group, is dependent upon the abundance of the food supply in the region. The Yaruro hunting groups are small and they stay in one camp not more than a few days; so, they are to be met plying up and down the river in their canoes or traveling over land to the water holes, ever hunting for food.

HUNTING TERRITORIES

224 621 596 Each hunting group has a territory over which it is free to roam. Over this region only its members are allowed to hunt and gather fruits and roots, but the rivers, the main streams, are open to all. The accompanying map shows the limits of the present hunting territory [174] of the Yaruros of the Capanaparo. It would seem that anciently, when the Yaruros were more numerous, they roamed over a vaster region cut up into small portions over which hunting rights were distributed among various hunting family groups. I was assured that the Yaruros of the Sinaruco also have divided their country into family units.

619 101 There is also a sort of division among the Yaruros which transcends family grouping. The Yaruros of the Capanaparo, for instance, consider themselves a unit, though loosely bound, as distinct from the Yaruros of the Sinaruco, so that they consider the land drained by the Capanaparo as theirs and the region drained by the Sinaruco as the land of the Yaruros of that river. And yet, above all this, there seems to be a tribal feeling as opposed to the tribal divisions. The real significance of this is that among the Yaruros there is permitted a degree of mutuality in the use of the hunting rights

1: Petrullo E-3 (1933-34) 1939 SS19 Yaruro SS19

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not allowed to the neighboring peoples, such as the Otomacos or the Achaguas. The social and linguistic bonds seem to be strong enough to cause the Yaruros to recognize themselves as a distinct people.

FOODS

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In the llanos food is not plentiful except in and along the rivers; but the foraging activities of the Yaruros are restricted to the banks of the Capanaparo and Sinaruco Rivers for another reason. The hunting of land animals has practically stopped for fear that they will be accused by the ranchers of killing cattle. In recent years the activities of the crocodile hunters have ruthlessly destroyed the game, and since such hunters live on the country they have consumed a portion of the available quantity of game on which the Yaruros depended for a livelihood.

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In the dry season game is concentrated along the rivers and the water holes. It is considerably easier to hunt it then than in the rainy season, when it is dispersed over the plains. The turtle, which is found in great quantities in the waters of the Orinoco and its tributaries, suffers a yearly mass hunt and destruction which has its effect on the food supply of the Yaruros. It has been discovered that the turtle fat and eggs will produce a fine grade of oil which sells for a high price. The result is that the breeding grounds of the turtles become yearly a scene of great activity and destruction. No one knows how many thousands of turtles and turtle eggs are gathered and converted into this oil late in the month of April.

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The meat staple of the Yaruros is the *Crocodilus babu*, a small crocodile which grows to about 6 feet long. This animal is hunted daily and eaten in its entirety. Its meat is esteemed above that of any other animal. On the other hand, the cayman, sought for its hide, is not hunted as a rule by the Yaruros. Perhaps this meat is not as savory as that of the babu, but the Yaruros give the reason that the large crocodile represents a race of mankind to which they are related. So that although occasionally it may be hunted for the price that its hide may bring, it is never eaten and never hunted consistently.

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Next to the crocodile, turtles, including the matamata and tortoise, are to be found broiling over the fires in every Yaruro camp, and if they are not broiling they can be seen in shallow pools of water with their forelegs tied to their hindlegs. In this way they can keep alive but cannot walk away. The armadillo is seldom obtained and other meats appear occasionally on the diet of the Yaruros. Fishing is resorted to when neither crocodiles nor turtles are obtainable. The caribe, which is the piranha of Brazil, is esteemed but little. The tonino, which can be seen gracefully playing in the water or can be heard snorting in the rivers at night, is never hunted. It also is

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4: Leeds E-5 (1958) 1960 SS19 Yaruro SS19

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make it usable. The need to eat makes woman's work more or less continuous, while the nature of production does not make man's work continuous. As long as there is food in the village, the man may rest, help his wife, or engage in non-food production such as canoe-making, as he chooses. [461]

Objects used by men are men's property and are inherited by the men; objects used by women are women's property and are inherited in the women's line. Immovable property such as gardens and houses are said to be inherited by the decedent's children of both sexes. Male animals, such as boars and dogs, are owned by men, the females by women. Thus the division of property is as sharp as the division of labor, a fact reflected throughout the ideology. 428 [422] [231]

No two producers produce the same quantity or inventory of goods, especially as each has great freedom to concentrate in the productive activities he prefers to the exclusion of others. Yet each producer contributes to household and community in what is felt to be equivalent value since most foods are considered good and of equal worth. Each household producing unit distributes supplies of raw or cooked foods to other households along the lines of coresidence and kinship. In this way, all villagers, as consumers, receive the same total amount of food and no one goes without. Thus all persons and households in the community are equivalent as producers, distributers, and consumers. All are tied together in a loosely formalized network of coordinate reciprocal exchanges and obligations in which scales of value are not necessary, since each person contributes approximately equally of all values. In this situation, accumulation of wealth by individuals is out of the question and management of production or of wealth distribution is unnecessary. Consequently, there are no economic status differentiations and no effective leadership among the Yaruro. 433 592 621 [435] [556] [554] [622]

Similarly, no purely social differentiations based on status ranking occur in Yaruro society, except by casual deference to those of age and experience like shamans and village spokesmen, called 'capitans'. The status of women is coordinate with that of men. The complementary and coordinate units, a man and a woman, combine into a series of coordinate but semi-autonomous units, the households. A group of these constitute the Yaruro social unit, the neither endogamous nor exogamous (Murdock's "agamous") village. All these units are tied together by links of bilaterally traced kinship, with coordinate relations on both sides, the ultimate tie being the reciprocal marriage of cross-cousins. Marriage is ideally matrilocal, and occurs most frequently within the village. As a consequence, the most immediate kinship ties in the village are matrilateral, whereas kinship among the men is more diffuse. The villages themselves are tied together by kinship ties, real or imputed, as well as by marriage and visiting, but by no other ties of an all-tribal nature. People who are known to any particular village —to 'us'— are considered part of our village's family, since their kinship ties to our members can be discovered or invented freely. Persons recognized as being of our linguistic and cultural stock will be included under the general term *pumé*, but may not be considered 'of our family' unless the kinship ties are recognized. Thus there is a Yaruro people, but no Yaruro tribal unit. Even the persons included in 'our family' do not constitute a unit, since there are no cross village unifying institutions other than real or imputed bilateral kinship ties. Even these vary from 554 621 [562] [592] 621 [612] [602] [619] [612]